

An Irish Heart

David McKee Wright



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AN IRISH HEART



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By DAVID McKEE WRIGHT

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To
A SCOTCHMAN
FOR
IRELAND'S SAKE.

*God bless the heather on
both sides of Moyle Water.*

1417043

*Och, the queerest thing is an Irish heart
(Will you take it away, Roseen, in your shawl?),
For 'tis sore to stay, and 'tis ill to part,
And there's nothing to stay its beating at all.*

*Is it drink with the boys till the day is light?
(Will you take it away, Roseen, in your shawl?)
Och, sure, 'tis the heart of the world for fight,
Or friendship or talk while it beats at all!*

*Is it sighs for pain, is it tears for pride?
(Will you take it away, Roseen, in your shawl?)
'Tis a red-blood heart that is ill denied,
And it plays all tunes while it beats at all.*

*Is it girls that laugh, is it girls to kiss?
(Will you take it away, Roseen, in your shawl?)
Bright eyes can teach it a beat to miss,
For it loves all girls while it beats at all.*

*Is it one soft girl with an Irish eye?
Will you take it away, Roseen, in your shawl?
Och, nurse it warm and 'twill surely try
To be loving no other at all at all.*

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AN IRISH HEART

NORAH'S COURTING

YOU that made the fiddle talk
All the night at Carrick Water,
Sure, you took the road to walk
With the heart of Moragh's daughter.

Sleep forgot the way to bed,
Kittling stars went wild with laughter;
Two that shone in Norah's head
Stayed as bright the morning after.

Fiddler man, you went your way;
Roads are long, and who could find you?
Norah's little heart all day
Followed pit-a-pat behind you.

Norah's foot was at the wheel—
White ewe-fleece a bride should cover—
Och, the road of jig and reel
Takes a girl to find her lover!

Roses blossom on the stalk,
Honey nights are warm with laughter—
You that made the fiddle talk,
Did you know her heart came after?

NORAH'S COURTING

Somewhere through the fields you go—
Old green coat and crow's black feather—
Scraping with your fiddle bow
Dreams across the summer weather.

Who could tell you Norah's thought—
White as bloom on mountain clover—
Chasing some sweet thing she sought,
Followed you the green world over?

Moragh came from Banagh Bay
Up the road to Carrick Water—
“Carill spoke me fair this day
For the bride-kiss of my daughter.”

Och, and what will Norah say?—
Fiddler dreams make young hearts idle—
Carill rides in cloak of blue,
Gold a jingle at his bridle.

Carill's house is mason stone.
Through its twenty windows gazing
All he looks on is his own,
Wood and field and cattle grazing.

NORAH'S COURTING

Och, and what will Norah say?
Pale she is to guess the riddle
For her heart is all astray,
Dancing courtship to a fiddle.

Pale she was in gown of white.
Up the road came Carill riding.
Would he know at plainest sight
That sweet secret of her hiding?

Clouds on yellow skies afloat
Turned to red in evening weather.
Who has on an old green coat?
Who would wear a crow's black feather?

Norah looked. Her smile came slow.
Sure, she guessed the easy riddle.
Carill, laughing, drew his bow,
Said his greeting with the fiddle.

Sleep forgot the way to bed,
Kittling stars went wild with laughter;
Two that shone in Norah's head
Stayed as bright the morning after!

MORN'S DESIRE

THE Young Day combs his yellow hair
On the mountains of Morn's Desire;
And, oh, but my Love, my Love is fair,
And her heart is a rose of fire!

The sea has fingers foamy white
That fondle the wet, wet sand;
But, oh, my Love has a touch as light
As the lily that is her hand.

The Young Wind draws a fiddle-bow
Over mountain, and sun, and sea;
But the voice of my Love is kind and low
With a bridal melody.

And all the world is mine to wear—
The sea, and the song, and the fire—
For, oh, but my Love, my Love is fair
On the mountains of Morn's Desire!

THE WAVE

I DREAMT a strange green dream of many
seas

Within a dusk-enchanted ocean dell,
Low at a palmy island's purple knees,
'Mid coral branch and weed, and rosy shell,
I heard the calling of the Master Breeze.

My soul awoke. From the white-sanded cave
The silver bubbles ran to kiss the light;
I saw the morning on the waters brave,
League beyond league of billows crested white
And I, in pride of life, a wandering wave.

Dancing in boundless meadows of the deep,
I saw ten thousand brothers at their play.
One lonely mountain islet seemed to sleep,
Shadowed against the shining morning way;
With barrier reefs my spirit longed to leap.

Away! There shrilled a trumpet of the wind
Out of the columned clouds that swept the sea.
The serried ocean, with a single mind,
Turned all about me—white crests bent to flee
Some elemental fear that rose behind.

THE WAVE

Again the trumpet. Billows far and wide
Reared at the challenge utmost curving bows
Of pliant water. Down the screaming tide,
In long stampede, the thunder-footed rows
Tossed the blown spindrift from their necks of pride.

Mad with the joy of that tumultuous race,
Stung with the salt whips of the smoking sea,
I leaped, spume-dappled, to the foremost place
Amid the watery thunders. Over me
The angered cloud-wrack showed a darkened face.

On, on, on, on! I led the shouting gale
With speed that mocked the heavy foot of day,
And made the dawning linger, rathe and pale,
Always behind us. Rifts of white mist lay
Upcurled before me like a shimmering veil.

I saw the windy morning lift the lace,
As with the reverence of a bridal hand,
To show the wonder of a shining space
Of sweet, wet forest, fringed with yellow sand,
And the clear beauty of a woman's face.

THE WAVE

I saw the rippling marvel of her hair,
Her dark, sweet eyes full of the summer south,
Her shell-white foot and snowy ankle bare,
And the one happy rose that was her mouth—
Dear God, the seas were cold, her face was fair!

Trembling, I hung aloft my shadowy green,
Wild longing filled my veins with opal fire,
Flashing all lights; I felt my spirit lean
Out, out, far out to touch my Soul's Desire. . . .
Death! . . . But my lips shall kiss my Spirit's Queen.

O Death! The strife is done, the race complete.
The yellow shore has hands to pluck me down.
In thunders of white foam I run to greet
My clear dream of the morning. Oh, I drown,
Broken and spent . . . but I have held her feet!

Back in the undersweep of endless seas
I faint in dusks, with swaying weed a-stream.
Lost are the magic lights, the singing breeze;
Cold scale and silver fin above me gleam. . . .
The slow tides tremble. . . . I am but of these.

THE WAVE

O Soul, aslumber in the white sand cave,
 What of the morning full of happy light,
The spirit-woven dreams of strong and brave,
 The clamant voice of star-forsaken night?
Ah, frail, green wonder of the wandering wave!

THE KISSING OF PEGEEN

IN the valley of little red trees
The grey dogs were hunting the hare;
With the kirtle of green to her knees
Came the fairy Pegeen to me there;
With the hare running under the trees
Pegeen made a song to me there.

Yellow girls, with the sun on their feet,
Ran in and out of the wood;
Sure, the air with their voices was sweet
Around the green place where I stood—
Och, the grass in the toes of their feet
Was green with a laugh where they stood.

Pegeen, fairy girl, she could sing
Till the daffodils stept to the tune,
And a thorn-tree, in bud at the Spring,
Let up a clean leaf to the noon.
Pegeen, fairy girl, it was spring,
And the sun was just warm at the noon.

Och! dimples she had to be sure,
With her hair like the wing of a crow,
And the white of her neck was a cure

THE KISSING OF PEGEEN

For a heart that was beating too slow—
Och, Pegeen, fairy girl! To be sure,
Mine couldn't be beating too slow.

'Twas the laugh of the girls in the sun,
'Twas the green on the lap of the world,
'Twas the way my wits fluttered and spun,
'Twas the way that her eyelashes curled
Made me mad for a kiss in the sun,
Where her lips at the corner were curled.

Pegeen, fairy girl, she could dance;
'Twas not easy to come at her waist.
Och! she puckered my soul with her glance,
But her lips had a wonderful taste;
Sure, the fairy girl led me a dance
Till I caught her pink mouth for a taste.

There's a fairy path over the hill,
There's a fairy bridge over the stream;
'Twas her song that was leading me still
And I went like a man in a dream. . . .
There were little red trees on the hill,
And the end of the road was a dream.

THE KISSING OF PEGEEN

Sure, I dreamt like a little brown hare,
'Twas me that the grey dogs would chase.
Och, fur is too handy to wear!
 Give me back the red kiss on my face!
Pegeen, I'm a little brown hare,
 Och, give a man back his poor face!

Yellow girls, with the sun on their feet,
Run in and out of the wood.
Troth, the sound of their voices is sweet,
 And the swish of their kirtles is good. . . .
There are little black toes on my feet,
 And to stop the grey dogs would be good.

A SONG OF PIPES AND TREES

I KNOW not if the trees of Arcady
Had broader leaves,
Or if old suns wove finer broidery
Than our sun weaves
On the warm quiet of the dimpled ground.
In Tempe's vale was laughter, and glad sound
Of waters free.
I know not if the brown gods laughed as well
On Ossa's knee
As the brown maids who hear the summer tell
Tales 'neath this tree.

They say Apollo had a reedy pipe
In Thessaly—
The world was all with wonder-music ripe
On land and sea—
He blew his silver breath into the air;
Enchanted naiads with their dripping hair
Rose from the streams. . . .
Perchance he would have changed his pipe for mine,
Whose incense seems
To make my couch beneath these boughs divine
With olden dreams.

A SONG OF PIPES AND TREES

My pipe can call, through rings of pearly smoke,
 The old blue day,
All that Apollo saw beneath his oak
 In ages grey.
All that the past upon the present spills
In joy of wonder through these shadows fills
 My pipe with sound;
And all things seek at its enchanted call
 This quiet ground—
I hold the flute Athene's hand let fall
 And Marsyas found.

THE ROBIN

THERE is a little ghost that walks at noon,
Making a piping on two simple straws
As, with the faltering of a faded tune,
A heartache from the yellow light he draws;
And all that I have known and still forget
Comes near me as the music rises shrill,
Something of old desire and new regret
And long days cool and still—
A hungry robin forty years ago came to my
window-sill.

That fainting melody I cannot catch
However long I strain my heart and ear.
Sometimes it seems my hand is on the latch
Of an old door that leads to rooms too dear;
And could that piper find one lost, far note,
The rusted hinge would turn again to show
Kind, homely things, so near yet so remote,
Out of the long ago—
The robin had a song when paths were white
with falling cherry-snow.

THE ROBIN

O little ghost, come with me where the green
 Of happy leaves may flutter round your song!
The street is grey, the passing thoughts too mean,
 The many voices set your music wrong;
But where the waters sparkle in the light
 And all the grass is bending to the wind
We two shall sit from shining noon till night
 Seeking that strain to find—
O robin, singing forty years ago down ways
 grown leafy-blind!

But you shall find the song, O little ghost,
 And I shall hear the music as it draws
The happy things I have forgotten most
 From the shrill hollow of two twittering straws;
And I shall walk again in other ways
 And hear a fuller music rise and sweep
Out of the hidden heart of faded days,
 Grown fresh from memory's sleep—
A happy robin forty years ago sang notes too
 full and deep!

BRIDAL SONG

YOU whose hair is black as grief,
You whose lips are red as sin,
Lift the latch and turn the leaf—
Happy Love, come in, come in!

From the caverns of your eyes—
Eyes that seem so shy and meek—
All the oracles arise
Joy's hot mysteries to speak.

On your breast the blisses sleep—
Raptures supine, soft and twin—
By the secrets that you keep,
Happy Love, come in, come in!

From the roundness of your throat
Throbs a music silver sweet,
And delicious airs afloat
Tremble laughter round your feet.

By your touches silken light,
By your hot, brown fingers thin,
By your kisses in the night,
Happy Love, come in, come in!

YOUTH

I STOOD amid high meadows, morning fair,
With moon-cupped blossoms round my careless feet,
And bending woods that, in a crystal air,

Stooped greenly to a valley clothed with wheat.
I heard the young birds sing, the young lambs bleat;
And somewhere world's delight was calling loud,
The while the wind was fingering my hair
Out of the mist-veil of a dreaming cloud.

Oh, gay was all my thought that silver morn,
The wine of life was glowing in my heart;
I heard the reapers' voices in the corn;
Strong-limbed, I swept the dews of dawn apart.
The dimpled sunbeams seemed to leap and start
Around me, and with laughter on the way,
Clashing their cymbals, blowing fife and horn,
Went all the bright-eyed children of the day.

Hot-foot I passed. The valley opened wide
Its shining arms, and all its harvest dress,
White as the shimmering garment of a bride,
Seemed on my heart its loveliness to press.
The summer morning was a long caress;
And all the happy kisses of the sun
With amber blushes lawn and woodland dyed
For gladness of another day begun.

YOUTH

And lo, before me, under bending shade,
 All rosy-white amid her shining hair,
I saw the clear limbs of the wonder maid,
 A laughing woman delicately fair. . . .
She fled, her loose robe trailing down the air,
 The red-lipped quarry youth's strong arm should take;
And all the shouting spirits of the glade
 Joined in the merry chase for sweet love's sake.

Then, pierced as by an arrow, long and keen,
 Of pointed sunshine darting from the height,
She stayed amid the maze of arching green
 With blushing face and panting bosom white.
Vanquished, she yielded lips of red delight
 To hunter-lips more hot to claim their prize;
And all her happy nature seemed to lean
 Out of the darkness of her splendid eyes.

The tall, white gods stept down amid the trees;
 Shrill music laughed aloud in pipe and shell;
And, ravished with sharp fragrance, the young breeze
 Laid airy hands on some mad wedding-bell
High in the branches o'er us. Silence fell
 After that tumult of ecstatic noise
We stood apart, shy-eyed, with trembling knees,
 Afraid to lift the burden of our joys.

THE HOLY PIPER

BLACK snakes, green snakes, hear
the pipes and understand!
Long snakes, small snakes, all the snakes
in Ireland.
Holy water, holy sod,
Shamrock leaf and the Cross of God—
Padraig pipes below his hand
To all the snakes in Ireland.

Loudly on the summer air
Rang the chapel's call to prayer,
Brazen notes that shook the bees
In white blossoms under trees,
While along the river bank
Danced the rushes, rank on rank,
As if fairy troops rode by,
Nodding cap and winking eye—
So the bell's vibrations went,
Making holy discontent.

Rose the people two and two,
Walking soft the green world through
To the chapel where this day
Padraig Saint would come to pray.
Rose the herdsman grey and old,
Rose the prince with chains of gold,

THE HOLY PIPER

Flashed the sail across the water,
Beat the hooves on turf and grass;
And O'Brien's fairest daughter
Heard the quiet people pass.

“All is well, All is well,”
Sang the rolling chapel bell.
“Come to prayer, Come to prayer,”
Echo whispered on the air.
Would she hear or would she heed
Saint or bell or book or bead?
Surely she was very fair
With a red rose in her hair!

Down the way a man would walk
Glowed the woodbine on its stalk,
Where a twisted apple tree
Stood in brambles to the knee—
It was there that she would go,
Ankle-white and pink of toe.
“All is well, All is well,”
Sang the rolling chapel bell.
Surely she was very fair
With a red rose in her hair!

THE HOLY PIPER

Bees about the briars hum
Down the way a man would come;
And a viper coiling there,
Angered, heard the call to prayer.
Ankle-white and pink of toe,
Would O'Brien's daughter know—
She with lips a man should kiss—
Fang and crest and warning hiss?
Death below the briars green
Struck and slipped away unseen.
Down the road a man would come.
Bees were still and death was dumb;
And the bell upon the air
Ceased its rolling call to prayer.

Came the people two and two
Walking back the green world through.
Padraig Saint, with beard of snow,
Blessed them ere they turned to go.
Pale and cold and very still
Lay Aideen and slept her fill.
Curse the worm and all his brood
Over grass or under wood,
Venom creeping through the day
While the people bend to pray!
Padraig, holy saint, came by,
Saw the folk and heard their cry.

THE HOLY PIPER

Padraig Saint, below his hand,
Played a pipe along the land;
Up and up the hill he went
In a holy discontent.
Snake in wood and grass and wall
Heard afar the music call.
Night fell black on tree and sod,
Shamrock leaf and Cross of God.
Snake and adder must obey
All the words the pipes will say.

*Wriggle, wriggle, twine and twist—
Adders in the mountain mist!
Fang and scale beneath the moon—
The holy piper makes the tune;
And all from Moyle to Kerry Water
'Tis wriggle and crawl to the western bay,
For the snake that bit O'Brien's daughter
Must answer the call of Judgment Day.*

Two white horns were on the moon
Looking light to aid the tune.
Up and up the hill he went
In a holy discontent.

THE HOLY PIPER

Wriggle, wriggle, writhe and twist,
Climbed the snakes through mountain mist;
Wriggle, wriggle, twist and twine;
They were there at morning-shine.

Padraig Saint, upon the hill,
Stayed his hand and laughed his fill—
“Now, by holy crook and cross,
Ireland’s gain’s the Devil’s loss!
I have tunes and tunes to spare—
Make your will and say your prayer—
There’s a sup of merry sea
Calling salt and blue to me.”

*Black snakes, green snakes, hear the
pipes and understand!
Long snakes, small snakes, all the snakes
in Ireland!
Holy water, holy sod,
Shamrock leaf and the Cross of God—
Padraig pipes below his hand
To all the snakes in Ireland.*

THE HOLY PIPER

Looked the saint to sea and sand,
Took the road the snakes must go.
Down the hill across the land
Rocks and bushes heard him blow.
Och, the pipes were summer-sweet,
Blossoms opened round his feet,
Vipers wriggled, adders crawled,
And the music called and called
Down the land across the sea,
“Follow, follow, follow me!”

On the dancing waves afloat
Padraig found a holy boat.
In they went, and on they went,
Through the waves they coiled and bent,
Took the water, left the sand,
All the snakes of Ireland.
Wriggle, wriggle, twist and twine—
When was music made so fine?
Sure, the sea was kind and wide—
Padraig’s piping turned the tide.
Now, sirs, swim—God bless deep water—
You that nipped O’Brien’s daughter!

SUNSET BAY

LITTLE wavelets, curly-wet, sipping at our toes,
This is pretty Sunset Bay, as everybody knows.
White foot, brown foot, little fishes' tails—
Oh, there's lots of laughing water where the big
ship sails!

Little wavelets, curly-wet, do you go to school?
Do you like the sands to shear all your pinky wool?
Red light, gold light, little nibbled moon—
All the world's a cherry tart, and no one has a
spoon.

Little wavelets, curly-wet, turn and run away.
Thank you for a merry splash; come another day.
Brown head, gold head, little fishes' fins—
Oh, the sky is catching bed-time up on small star
pins!

THE BEGGAR'S BOWL

THREE grey beggars at the door—
Con McAlister made four.
What would yon small creature be
Sitting by the stackyard tree?

Sure, my heart was mercy light;
Both my arms with meal were white.
Four grey men on weary feet
Blest me for the bite to eat.

Four grey beggars at the door—
Would they know my need was sore,
Wanting four gold pounds to pay
Land-rent of the fields that day?

Up she came when they were gone.
Red the shawl that she had on,
Ragged kirtle to the knee,
Greener than the sally tree.

“Bless your roof-thatch, lady kind;
Cold the day and rough the wind—
Let me sit on yon wee seat,
Lady tall, to warm my feet.”

THE BEGGAR'S BOWL

Ill I thought to speak her no.
In she came from frost and snow,
On the wooden creepy small
Sat her down in cap and shawl.

Bowl of warm milk on her knee,
Her blue eyes looked up at me—
“Hand that gives for kindness' sake
Out of kindness' lap must take.”

“Sure,” I laughed, “the cows are kind.
Small your need that I would mind
Giving what your bowl will hold,
Bite and sup against the cold.”

Out she went when she was warm,
Bag of white meal on her arm—
“Gold and corn be in your store,”
So she blest me at the door.

Shawn, my man, was far away,
And the land-rent was to pay;
Rough of voice and ill of look
Him that brought the quarter's book.

THE BEGGAR'S BOWL

Near my three blue rows of delf,
Up I reached to touch the shelf.
Three white crowns I had to pay
What the man would ask that day.

Och, 'twas ill to fret and frown!
Slow I took the silver down;
Then I saw—keep still, my soul!—
What was in the beggar's bowl.

Four gold pounds, and minted new—
Och, my heart, what will I do?
Will the kind hand-gift of such
Curse me black at sight and touch?

Father Flaherty came in.
“Och, will it be soil or sin?”
Sure, he laughed my fear away—
“Let it soil the man you pay.”

Shawn came home. His purse was full.
Warm we keep the creepy stool.
Always by the good turf blaze
Beggars sit on winter days.

THE BEGGAR'S BOWL

Grey old men, on weary feet,
Bless me for the bite to eat.
Hand that gives for kindness' sake
Out of kindness' lap will take.

A SONG OF RED THINGS

RED roses! Nodding to me on the stem
Through scented gloom,
Ye fondle Eden's fragrance by the hem
With hands of bloom.

The velvet shadows of your petals hold
In wondrous wise
All tender magic of the new and old—
God's painted sighs.

What never breeze or wavelet could express
He breathed in you—
The secret word, wrought in a rose's dress,
Of all He knew.

.
Red hair! The splendid flower of womanhood,
Rich fold on fold,
Blossoms like burnished copper threads imbued
With blood of gold.

Such glory as tall angels learn to spin
On bobbins seven,
Whirring the wheels of rapture, void of sin,
In some chaste heaven.

A SONG OF RED THINGS

Such flame as, streaming on the wind of life,
 Sets hearts afire,
Sharpening the swords of kings for madder strife
 Than world desire.

.

Red leaves! With what a pomp the drifting year
 Falls to its close!
Gone is the poppy's laughter, and the clear
 Hue of the rose.

What flaunting splendours mock the greyer sky,
 The flying cloud—
Brave things, condemned, that wear, even as they die,
 Their liveries proud!

Spent blood of Autumn, sprinkled on the sod
 Of a lost day,
Staining the white and fragrant feet of God
 Who walks that way!

EARTH SONG

HERE it is good to lie
Under the sunburnt sky,
To watch the lazy wing
Of a bird too glad to sing,
To hear the tall trees talk
Where the dry leaf taps the stalk,
And the summer wind goes by
Making a laugh and sigh.

Listen, with ear low down,
To the kind earth hot and brown!
You can hear the world's pulse beat
With a motion still and sweet;
You can hear the tree-roots tell
Of the thunder showers that fell
And the murmur of the stones
That in mellow undertones
Answer softly, "All is well."
Aye, but put your ear low down
To the kind earth-bosom brown.
Listen well, listen long.
Can you hear the little song
Lilting, lilting from below
To a music that you know?

EARTH SONG

What does the old world say,
All the hours of all the day,
Very lowly, very sweetly,
That your heart may hear completely
And be wise?
Always is the word the same,
Though the music changes often
With the changes of the skies.
'Tis a happy woman's name.
And the vowels round and soften
To the ancient melody—
The eternal you and me—
That the earth for ever sings
'Neath the feet of clowns and kings.

Here it is good to lie
Under the sunburnt sky,
To hear the old earth croon
Beneath the yellow noon;
And always to feel and know
In the music's ebb and flow

EARTH SONG

That you are the heart of all,
As you are the heart of me,
That ever in rise and fall
The world's first minstrelsy
Breathes to the grass above
Only our love, our love.

FAIRY ROSE

THE world was all white with the snow,
But it made a cold darkness to me;
'Tis a heavy, long way he must go
With a stick when a man cannot see.

There's a house at the top of the glen,
And there's one at the foot of the rise—
Och, it's walking is hard on dark men,
Though it's lightsome for them that have eyes.

She came through the road in the trees,
She set her soft hand in my own—
"Will you buy a red rose, if you please,
Dark man, that are walking your lone?

"'Tis a penny in summer they are,
But in winter they sell for a kiss. . . ."
Och, I've travelled the land near and far
And never heard talking like this.

And would I be heeding at all
A wild word like that she might speak?
Sure, I laid my cold hand on her shawl—
"Would you mock a blind man to his cheek?"

FAIRY ROSE

'Twas like a warm wind from the south,
 She lifted the rose small and sweet—
"Will you give me a kiss on the mouth,
 Dark man with your eyes in your feet?"

'Twas a voice like a bird in the spring;
 And what would a man do at all?
Och, she kissed like a butterfly's wing
 When it touches a weed on the wall.

'Twas lightsome. 'Twas more. . . . 'Twas the light—
 The blessed white light on the snow.
Sure, that kiss gave a man his plain sight;
 I saw the small houses below.

There was laughter along in the trees,
 And a patter of light-running feet—
Och, the fairies are good when they please
 To the dark men they happen to meet.

Sure, I went like a man in a dream
 Near the black hedges dropping the snow,
And over the bridge at the stream
 To the little warm houses below.

FAIRY ROSE

"Is it Ryan, the dark man?" they said,
And the childer came round me to feel—
"Is it eyes that you have in your head
Since you went down the road to Kilkeel?

"'Tis the wonder of God to be sure! . . ."
And I thought of the girl on the hill.
When the fairies will bring you the cure
'Tis best that your tongue should be still.

And the spring came up over the land—
Och, the wonder of blossom and tree!
For the world lay all new to my hand,
With the sun throwing gold upon me.

There's a house near the top of the glen,
And there's one at the foot of the rise;
And 'tis good to be seeing like men,
With the long, open road in your eyes.

But I think, will she come through the trees?
Will she put her soft hand into mine?
Will she say: "Buy a rose, if you please,
Tall man that are seeing so fine?"

FAIRY ROSE

“ ‘Tis in winter for healing they are,
 ‘Tis in summer to make your heart light—”
Och, girl, I’ll be looking too far,
 And ‘tis hungry I am for one sight.

Will she come like a bird in the spring?
 Och, what will a man do at all?
Sure, she kist like a butterfly’s wing,
 When it touches a weed on the wall.

A NEW ZEALAND FAIRY SONG

RONA in the springtime plucked the snowy flowers,
Made a crown to crown her queen beneath the rata tree,
When there came a patterning of feet like August showers,
And a pretty music-song of "Follow, follow me."

Rona, with the snowy blooms in her golden tresses,
Heard the little people, and she followed all the day.
"Oh, and what will mother say if she only guesses
How the pretty fairies came and whispered me away?"

Down among the feather-fern, down among the mosses,
Up again across the stream, and by the river's brim,
Where the saucy toi-toi all her soft hair tosses
At the laughing water-bubble, after kissing him.

On the music wandered, all through the dark and brightness,
And Rona tried to catch it where the fuchsia berries grew,
Sure she saw the glimmer of a little bonnet's whiteness,
And in among the branches a little skirt of blue.

A NEW ZEALAND FAIRY SONG

Over mossy boulders, and past the big white pine,
Once, she came so near them, she heard their arm-
lets ringing,

And she saw the pretty jewels on their fairy fingers fine.

All the day she followed them, and when the stars
came peeping

She saw their lamp-lights moving about in merry play.

"Oh, and what will mother say when all the house
is sleeping,

And she knows the pretty fairies have taken me away?"

Down the soft brown shadow-way, and up the
 moonbeam tripping,

Across the bridge of morning, far and far from
mother's knee,

Stepping on the clouds and stars with never fear of
slipping,

She heard the pretty music-song of "Follow,
follow me!"

CREATION

THUS it was at eventide.
All my soul was open wide,
And the windows of my heart
Summer's fingers held apart.
Over trees a music fell,
As of some far wind-stirred bell
Tossing in a belfry high,
Built in depths of moonlit sky.
But no wind the near air stirred.
Lightly as a spoken word
Breathed within a lover's ear
Dropt rose-flakes my casement near;
And a white moth's dusty flight
Made faint sound across the night.

Shadowed faces came and went,
Shadow eyes above me bent—
Ghostly robe and veil and zone—
Harvest of old dreamings sown
In glad hours when bird and wing
Filled the fallowed field of spring.
Scarce I breathed in that still hour,
Strange enchantment, rich with power,
With white hands my longing prest
Lightly to her silken breast.

CREATION

Suddenly the silence thrilled!
Magic light my spirit filled,
And the forms my dreamings wrought
In full nets of truth were caught.
Worlds were open to my ken
Thronged with life and breathing men;
Music from a woman's throat
Edged with laughter seemed to float,
And strange flutter of strange wings
Winnowed thrones of gods and kings,
While all woes that were and are
Wailed aloud to sun and star.
Blood that all the years had bled,
Tears that all the sins had shed,
Raining wildly over me
Held me in an agony;
But through all there seemed to float
Laughter from a woman's throat.

Gardens gay with bloom and bird,
Dusts a Pharaoh's chariot stirred,
Lonely streams whose dappled shores
Heard theplash of pilgrim oars
Ere a royal secret hid
'Neath the oldest pyramid—

CREATION

These in vision fair and fine
For a holy hour were mine.
Suns of oldest deserts set
By the jewelled minaret;
And the cave-man lean and white
Stared soul-startled through the night.
But through all there seemed to float
Laughter of a woman's throat.

Some white oread, wet with dew,
Heard the pipes the shepherd blew
On the hillside's thymy steep
Where the long flocks loved to creep;
And a little altar smoke
Made blue shadows near the oak.
Sun-brownèd gods, from worship free,
Talked with maids on Ossa's knee.
Bearded kings with furrowed brow
Taught the oxen teams to plough;
And a sudden clash of shields
Rang across the Spartan fields,
Where a wail of death arose
From a town beset with foes.

CREATION

There the long ships near the shore
Moved to wind and slave-strained oar
Bearing plunder of the south—
Fairer slaves of redder mouth
And the robes that queens desire,
Purple from the looms of Tyre.
These in vision clear and fine
For a mystic hour were mine;
But through all there seemed to float
Laughter from one woman's throat!

Horror on the death-choked air!
Pits of darkness and despair
Shudder 'neath the charnel lights,
Where the red worm writhes and bites
And the living dead strive on
When all things but pain are gone;
And an awful purpose heaves
Through the slime that sobs and grieves,
As if mammoth forms unborn
Strove to reach the bitter morn
When a hope, in Hope's despite,
Yet might win them air and light
That their stagnant lips might stain
The red mouth of Faith again. . . .
Yet o'er all there seemed to float
Laughter of a woman's throat.

CREATION

Shadow on the cloistered ways.
Here no idle footfall strays,
But with hood about his ears
Talks the schoolman with his peers.
Monkish books are stored within;
Restless quills must strive to win
From the ways the sages trod
All that is of man and God,
Following the laboured line
Of a song of loves and wine,
Lest within the script should hide
Earth's last wonder, open-eyed.
Salmon from the flowing stream—
Tonsored heads have caught the gleam
Of a sun that redly sets,
Tinging learning with regrets
For the open life and free,
Heedless of philosophy;
For through all there seemed to float
Laughter of a woman's throat.

All the things that I had dreamed
In that hour about me streamed,
Clear as in the well of youth
Gleams the jewel light of truth.

CREATION

I, the dream-creator, there
Viewed my world through finer air;
Strange, aloof from that I wrought,
Saw the long, white lanes of Thought,
Even as God may look to see
Ages fainting at His knee. . . .
Yet through all there seemed to float
Laughter from a woman's throat.

God whose dream in early spring
Taught the youngest bird to sing,
Filled a garden full of bloom
For the first sweet bridal room,
Winged the planets in their flight—
Must He see as I this night?
Must He hear o'er all things float
Laughter from a woman's throat
As the last and perfect thing
Of His vast imagining?
Hear its silver throbbing call
Piercing sweetness through the gall,
And its clear insistence still
Mastering all thought and will?
Must He hear?—Ah, God and I,
Dreaming till all dreams run dry,

CREATION

Faint before the perfect thing
Of our own imagining. . . .
Living woman that I wrote,
By the laughter in your throat,
By the dreams that come and die,
Did God make you or did I?

THE SILVER RING

THE blue smoke came up from the thatch,
The white walls were hot in the sun,
The girl, with her hand on the latch,
Looked in where her grey mother spun.

Och, why would her eyes be so blue,
And her hair like the night with no moon,
And the small secret thing that she knew
Go soft in her heart like a tune?

“The brown goat is tied to the stone,
And the milk is set warm in the dish;
I'll be leaving you, mother, your lone
Till I bring you the two herring fish.

“The ass with the creels is below,
Coming up through the whins from the bay,
And Carty, the pedlar, I know
Will be walking from Innis this day.”

The grey mother looked from her wheel,
Broke her thread at the half of the twirl—
“Go along with your fish from the creel—
'Tis the pedlar that calls to you, girl.”

THE SILVER RING

She has past by the thorn on the rise,
She has crost the brown path through the whins—
Och, the thing that she saw with her eyes
Where the wood on the hillside begins.

She had dreamt that she found it last night,
And, sure, 'twas the same in the day—
A ring of bright silver as white
As the scales on the fish in the bay.

Now who would be leaving it there
On the moss by the foot of a tree?
'Twas a thing for a young queen to wear,
With her two idle hands on her knee

Och, heart, would it fit on her hand,
On her smallest white finger of all?
Was it music came over the land?
Was she hearing the strange voices call?

The pedlar with ribbons and thread
Stayed long at the foot of the rise.
Och, girl, with black night on your head,
He was sore for a sight of your eyes!

THE SILVER RING

The ass with the creels was away,
With the herring fish new from the net,
And the bare-footed childer at play
Made shouts till the red sun had set.

The night, with small stars and no moon,
Came up salt with the smell of the sea—
Och, heart, was it set to a tune,
The wind that blew out of the tree?

The grey mother sat in her shawl
With no word, but her look on the door—
Och, what was she dreaming at all
Of the girl that came back nevermore?

Was it patter of feet that came near?
Was it voices that talked in the thatch?
Did a girl laugh with never a fear
As we heard a small hand on the latch?

Och, put out sweet milk on the sill,
For the Good Folk will come to the door.
Think kind, close your eyes and keep still,
If you hear a fine step on the floor.

VIKING SONG

CLANG, clang, clang on the anvil,
In the smithy, by the dark North Sea;
Is it Thor that is smiting with the hammer?
Is it Odin with the leather on his knee?
Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
There are steel ships wanted on the sea!

Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
And the flames of the forges leap.
Old Thor with his red beard glowing
Has his eye on the furrows of the deep.
Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
For the forge of the viking may not sleep.

Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
And the hammers of the South Land leap.
Australia with her bright hair glowing
Has her eye on the furrows of the deep.
Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
For the blood of the viking may not sleep.

VIKING SONG

Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
On the margin of the sun-bright sea.
Is it Odin that is watching in the shadow?
Is it Thor where the sparks fly free?
Clang, clang, clang on the anvil,
There are steel ships wanted on the sea!

THE SINGERS

WE shall walk daintily in later dew
On sweet, far mornings speaking these
grave words,
Wearing worn silver on our garments blue
While spring is full of nests and cheeping birds.

And when the clocks chime on, and hearts forget,
We shall be very still, as are the wise,
Nursing the dreams that make us fairer yet
For the wide wondering of newer eyes.

Above our heads shall soar large roof and dome,
Long windows flaking colour through the gloom,
Where the great music has its silent home
And rich old bindings in the shadows bloom.

But we shall rise and go away, away
Down happy meadows to the calling seas,
And speak all moments of the yellow day
Or sing to moonlight in the lisping trees.

THE SINGERS

Leaves rustle brownly in the autumn wind.

All books shall fade. But, in a realm apart,
We shall go fearlessly through all the blind,
Green places of the ever-singing heart.

And we shall hear and know, too glad for pride,

The hot, sweet words our rebel dreamings hurled
Against cold Thought's despair come as a tide
Flooding across the evening of the world.

THE BALCONY

THE moon's eye winked on the ruby wine,
And a cunning moon was she,
Fondling with light the trellised vine
On the balcony by the sea;
And there the reddest cup was mine,
The reddest cup of three.

We drank to friendship and fortune's chance,
And we pledged the love of two,
And the cloud-caught moon looked down askance
For the secret thing she knew—
The touch of a hand and a maiden's glance,
And a heart that was false and true.

Three in the light of the passing moon,
And one that spake farewell;
We spilled the wine to an old heart's tune
Or ever the long cloud fell;
And two were left, and the dark came soon
With a traitor word to tell.

One alone on the swaying ship
Dreaming of love and friend—
Oh, warm, warm joy of the close-pressed lip

THE BALCONY

In the dusk where the shadows blend—
Are there two with the wine of life adrip,
Spilt red to the scornful end?

The chill dawn looked on the ruby wine,
Corpse-pale she seemed to me,
While a breath of green weed, wet with brine,
Blew in from the faithless sea;
And a stained and broken cup was mine—
Ah, God, we had broken three!

A SONG OF LITTLE GARDENS

THERE'S a hum of quiet music in the deepening of the twilight,
Like far bells in distant valleys heard through
lull of murmurous trees,
Or the elfin chant that haunts us when the thin
moon casts a shy light
Down a happy wind-tossed mountain with a
cornfield at its knees.
'Tis the song of little gardens, 'tis the song of
quiet labour,
Of the purple grapes in cluster and the rose
upon the wall,
Of the blue smoke climbing skyward and the
kindly-nodding neighbour,
And the moist, warm earth upbreathing its
brown benison for all.

Tall white angels, winging higher through the
incense that enshrouds them,
Striking with their slim, white figures chords
with Godward longing tense,
Pause and bend with eager faces through the
mystery that clouds them,
As that lower, sweeter earth-note trembles on
their holy sense.

A SONG OF LITTLE GARDENS

'Tis the song of little gardens, weeded borders
green and growing,
Watered seed-beds faintly breathing where the
starlight fires the dew,
Youngest tendrils closely clinging, and the broad
leaves softly blowing
Over buds that kiss in darkness when the warm
wind wakes anew.

Where the drums of death are throbbing, and the
fires of doom are burning,
And the lightnings fork and shiver through the
fields of God's despair,
Where the torrent slaughter pouring hellward with
each day's returning,
Drowns the world in tears of madness, comes a
murmur on the air.
'Tis the sigh of little gardens, trampled under foot
and wasted,
Of the withered leaf and blossom by the black
and broken wall,
Of the vine torn from the trellis, and the fruit that
falls untasted,
And the awful thing unburied where the weeds
are rank and tall.

A SONG OF LITTLE GARDENS

Through the world-cry and the darkness, stony
grief, and fierce red sorrow,
Through the war hymns and the shouting,
through the victor's shuddering cheer,
Comes the hope-voice, faint, but clearly borne on
mist-wings of the morrow,
Calling all the earth to quiet, making music of
her fear.
'Tis the song of little gardens, better walled and
safely guarded,
With the large fruit hanging golden o'er the
graves of broken kings;
And the holy sweat of labour by the brown earth's
gifts rewarded,
With the peoples calm to listen while the warm,
sweet summer sings.

IRELAND

A GREEN and purple island of the sea,
A red and very bitter story told,
Flecked with the jewel-tales set deep in gold,
And aching with the pride of memory.
A stalwart people straining to be free;
Yet in their bondage rich to have and hold
More than broad Freedom's ample robes may fold
Of all that fills the soul's fine treasury.

Be still, my dream, my purpose and my love,
O Island of White Saints and happy things
Set to a mournful cadence in the west—
Green graves below, a sorrowing mist above—
Yet with a voice that down the ages sings
Till men who never knew thee hold thee best!

HELLAS AT WATSON'S BAY

THE wonder tale that Hellas told
 This hour is mine:
The moony mountains lit with gold,
 The seas of wine,
The large gods floating wingless down the world,
The incense from dim woodland altars curled,
 The temples white,
The magic of the briny-scented day
 Chasing the night,
And all the young Ægean winds at play
 Piping delight.

Beside the reeds the pool is blue
 As amethyst,
The grass is wet with morning dew,
 The sun uprist
Looks on Athene's bosom, snowy bare,
And all the marvel of her shining hair
 Tossed by the wind . . .
The sweet fear of that beauty I have seen
 Has made me blind;
And all the world is dark until my Queen
 I trembling find.

HELLAS AT WATSON'S BAY

Selene, climbing up the sky,
 Thinks me asleep;
In Latmos it is good to lie
 Amid my sheep;
In Latmos it is good to lie and sip
The chaste, wild honey of her virgin lip
 On nights like this,
When all her starry maids with laughter shake
 To know her bliss—
Ah, sly, white Queen! She faintly stoops to take
 From dreams a kiss.

At Watson's Bay the sun is fair,
 The sea is blue;
I find Athene standing there
 When I find you;
And when along the harbour dusks at night
I watch the steamers trail long feet of light
 Till the moon rise,
Selene comes to kiss me on the lips
 With no surprise;
And the old world into the new world dips
 In May's bright eyes.

WEED-TRYST

OCH, what would you see in the weeds to-day,
Moineen, Moineen,
That you left your song and you left your play,
Moineen, Moineen?
The thorn's in bloom and the ash-tree's green,
And a pedlar man's come up the way
With a pack of brooches and ribbons gay;
Now what would you see in the weeds to-day,
Moineen, Moineen?

Och, the water's green and the weeds are wet.
What else would I see?

There's a young cod fish, but I have no net.
What else would I see?

Now what would the water be saying to me?
There a red weed there with a brown weed met,
And five sea stars on a grey stone set.
And where's the need for a girl to fret?

What else would I see?

Och, honey woman, you sit too long.
Moineen, Moineen!

'Tis a cold wet sight and the day goes wrong,
Moineen, Moineen!

WEED-TRYST

Would you see dark things in the water green?
Would you watch for a sight of the fairy throng
With their speech so soft and their spells so strong?
Och, girl, 'tis a sin to hear their song.

Moineen, Moineen!

Now what would you make with your talk to me?
And why would I rise?

'Tis a hole in the rocks with a sup of the sea.
Och, why would I rise?

Is it feared I'd be of a sight of my eyes?
I'll gather my kirtle over my knee,
And I'll lift the weed and let them free;
So run and hide, if it's fairy or Shee,
When I bid them rise.

She has put her foot in the waters cold.

Moineen, Moineen!

Come out, wild woman, the way you're told.

Moineen, Moineen!

Och, sure, 'tis the strangest sight was seen.
On a bed of weed with a crown of gold,
With a silver staff for his hands to hold . . .
Och, heart, 'tis a king of the days of old!

Moineen, Moineen!

WEED-TRYST

Is it dead he is or sleeping at all?

Och, leave him lie!

Were the men of Emain so fine and tall?

Girl, leave him lie!

Och, woman dear, 'tis a live man's eye;

And the drawing tide begins to call.

Was that a word that his mouth let fall?

His breath comes up in the bubbles small.

Och, leave him lie!

She has lifted his cold hand, wet with the sea.

Moineen, Moineen!

She has raised his head on her naked knee.

Moineen, Moineen!

'Tis his dripping arm round her kirtle green,

'Tis his gold crown slipt from his temples free,

'Tis his cold, blue eyes that look on me—

Och, girl, that such things in the weed should be—

Moineen, Moineen!

He has set a kiss on her mouth so red.

Och, shame and fear!

Her dark, sweet hair is over his head.

Och, shame and fear!

WEED-TRYST

The tide comes up and the tide comes near
And she will not rise till her word is said—
Och, girl, but They make you a cold wet bed. . . .
And the time goes slow with the sea-drowned dead—
 Och, shame and fear!

MOON DREAM

THE moon was all freckled with cloud,
The pipes of the fairies were shrill;
The tree pirouetted and bowed
To the wind sweeping over the hill—
It was good to be chasing a cloud,
With the moon peeping over the hill.

The lake of the sky was so blue,
And the stars were like fish in a net.
Now, what was night trying to do,
Painting all the world amber and jet?
The sky was a cloud-tufted blue,
And the earth was all amber and jet.

.

O girl, with the wind in your hair!
There's a dream running wild in my heart,
The night has a moonbeam to spare
To tie it and hold it apart—
Oh, tie up my dream in your hair
Lest the mad thing should try to depart!

PEN OF MINE

PEN of mine, pen of mine,
I will give you ink for wine
And white paper for your play
All a merry, windy day,
When pond waters come lip-lapping
 On the grass
And the laughing leaves are tapping
 On the window as they pass.
I will give you ink for wine
Till you dream a fancy fine,
Pen of mine, pen of mine!

Pen of mine, the world is grey,
Making dead men all the day,
Stamping sorrow in the clay;
And a bitter chorus runs
From the muzzles of the guns—
Death is early, death is late!
In his garments of black hate,
Running youth and beauty after,
How he slays the mirth and laughter
 Of the day!
Let us play,

PEN OF MINE

Pen of mine.
I will give you ink for wine
Till your starry fancies shine
With a lilt in every ray.

Pen of mine, pen of mine,
We'll go gipsying again
Over lands and blowing brine
To our castles in old Spain,
To the places that we know
Where the yellow lilies grow,
And the little lute-strings quiver
To the dimples of the river,
While the old delicious note
Pulses from the whitest throat
All the night till morning-shine.
Pen of mine, pen of mine,
There is laughter in the wine!

Pen of mine, the days return;
Happier suns are still to burn.
Of our years the latest comer
Shall bring back the first white summer.
Shrill your pipes for ever, Pan,
As when pinkest dryads ran

PEN OF MINE

Blowing kisses, red and rude,
To the satyrs in the wood
And the frolic thought went free
Laughing over Arcady—
Pen of mine, pen of mine,
Drown the Gadarean swine!

Pen of mine, the Spanish Main
Sees the silver ships in train.
Fare we forth from Bristol town,
Bold to take and bold to drown.
Swings old time upon its hinge—
Philip's beard is good to singe;
Drake will answer to his drum
Where they serve the reddest rum.
Westward ho! and Eastward ho!
Kiss me thrice before we go!
Homeward bound! The Asian air
Tingles to the spices rare.
We shall find an Arab tent
Wider than a continent
Till, with all our canvas free,
We round the bend of Memory,
Seeking with our jolly crew
That first music laughter blew.

PEN OF MINE

Blow, Pan, blow! And here's the Devil
Come hot-foot to grace the revel,
With the clown and pantaloon,
And elfin dances 'neath the moon,
Orpheus and the Muses Nine
And Venus smiling from the brine,
With Prester John and Paul and Peter
And Rosamund, with Hal to greet her,
And jolly friar and modern ranter
And Quilp and Punch and Tam o' Shanter—
Blow high, blow low!
The world shall go
To the mad dance it used to know!
For pen of mine, pen of mine,
There's wine in ink and ink in wine.

THE HOLY THING

IT was a palmer, hand on staff,
Came back from Holy Land.
He trolled a song, I heard him laugh
Along the yellow sand.

The sun was drowning in the sea;
And of good heart he bore
A token found in Galilee
Beside the ancient shore.

Fair was the wood and smooth and black,
Dovetailed and square and true;
The box was strapped upon his back
For Christian men to view.

The palmer, with his staff and shell,
To bench and workshop sought,
That Christian carpenters might tell
How fair the joints were wrought.

"What thing is this that he would show?—
God's love's the Devil's loss!—
This is no wood, as well we know,
Nail-marked of holy cross!"

THE HOLY THING

"No wood of holy cross," he cried,
And paused that all might see,
" 'Tis wood of holy sweat and pride
Hand-wrought in Galilee.

"Of holy pride and holy sweat
And skilful hand it came—
More price upon this sign I set
Than on His cross of shame."

He trolled a stave, I heard him laugh;
Of all good heart was he,
The palmer leaning on his staff
Beside the sunset sea.

"Oh, holy sweat and holy breath!—
God's love's the Devil's bane!—
Oh, holy saw of Nazareth!
Oh, holy square and plane!

"Stooped at a bench below a tree
He wrought it fair and true—
Look, Christian carpenters, and see
The work the Lord could do!"

CAVE NIGHT

THE lusty cave-men hold their revels deep,
Drinking from carven cups of mammoth bone,
Where rotted apples a red fever keep,
Brimming in blackened vats of hollow stone.

The bear-fat lamps stream with a smoky flare,
And in the flickering shadows, far apart,
The red maid, wonderful amid her hair,
Grapples the dragon-slayer to her heart.

The ponderous silent feet upon the floor
Tread a mad measure to a beaten skin;
Red, like the wolf-eyes at the cavern door,
Hag-glances pierce the heavy dark within.

The dancers, fierce with thirst, their limbs unloose,
And clutching dripping cups of mammoth bone,
Drain the red fever of the apple juice,
Rotted in blackened vats of hollow stone.

IN GREEN AND BLUE

GREEN is for tired eyes,
Blue for a long thought;
Old and very wise
 Are the lessons the sky taught.
But folly lives in the green;
 And the green for me
Under the rustling sheen
 Of a laughing tree.

Sea that is very blue
 As I look from the hill,
Old and wise are you
 When the winds are still:
Old and wise am I
 When my heart is slow;
I have looked at the old sky,
 And I know—I know.

Sea that is very green
 In the lapping pool,
Close have I looked and seen,
 Where the weeds are cool,

IN GREEN AND BLUE

How the dimpled folly goes
In laughter and sighs,
Rippling the water that knows
More than the wise.

Sky that is very blue,
If my heart could stand
And look at the heart of you
From the highest land,
Would I find green folly there
Laughingly rise
Through the pools of the dimpled air
That seem too wise?

Green is for merry heart,
Blue for a long thought;
Would ye tear with a word apart
The lesson the world taught?
Blue and green of fine weather!
God bless the laughter and sighs
That go always together
In the heart of the wise!

CHILD SONG OF THE RAIN

LITTLE green rain from the dark of the sky;
I am sure you are green, for the grass was so dry,
And you painted it over and made it all spring
Till the little birds listening could hear the blades sing.

And somebody peeping
Saw God Himself weeping,
With the world for a handkerchief pressed to His eye.

Perhaps He was crying for Brian and me.
For the little birds chirped and were happy and free;
And we must stay in with a doll and a book,
And could only tiptoe to the window and look
Through a sprinkly old pane,
While the little green rain
Was kissing the spiders away from the tree.

Little green rain, go away by and by,
And tell the good sun to come out in the sky;
And if God feels so sorry for Brian and me,
Just tell Him how cleanly you've washed His old tree,
And perhaps He'll be kind,
And to-morrow we'll find
He's spread His big handkerchief nicely to dry.

IMMORTALITY

THREE shall be nights of weeping
And shining morns after.
Into our hearts will come creeping
Happy world laughter.

Heart of me, God's red mouth
Has a full wind for blowing
Music out of the south
Over green things growing.

The eyes in our head
May be dim with the salt tears falling;
But surely, surely the rose is red
And the birds are calling!

With word-sheaves to bind us,
The fields of their harvest grow white;
But God never meant darkness to blind us
When He gave us the night.

Thought sits late and pale
With a hard crabbed book for the reading;
And daylight and lampshine may fail,
But would we be heeding?

IMMORTALITY

Would we be heeding who know?
Let them mock us and leave us;
For Love, scraping tunes with his bow,
Will never deceive us.

And 'tis up and away to the places
Beyond and afar
Where the laughter on all the kind faces
Is rayed like a star.

Heart of me, was it God made laughter?
Would He let a tear come
Splashing His bright work hereafter
And drowning it dumb?

Grave mould is death to their thinking
Who never yet knew
How the worms under green grass are winking
At all that they do.

But we know, Heart of me, I have read it
Deep down in your eyes,
Where God Himself seven times said it
To make my heart wise.

IMMORTALITY

Life is the end of life,
Not dying and sorrow;
And a star has a star for wife
Yesterday and to-morrow.

And I have you to love me
Each day and the fine day after,
As sure as God above me
Made laughter!

THE MOON-GIRL

THE white moon touched the sea,
And the moon-girl came to me
Out of the gossamer night
On sandals of still light.

Her lustrous arms were bare,
And all her cloudy hair,
Star-fondled, golden, free,
Fell softly over me.

She warmly leaned to mine
Lips redder than red wine—
The young gods die who miss
Such wonder of a kiss.

The warmth of her white breast
Spake mysteries of rest,
And all my soul was wise
With marvel of her eyes.

As in a happy dream,
All Nature seemed to stream
Around us a slow tide
Of Life beatified.

THE MOON-GIRL

I know not how she went. . . .
The grey Morn, from her tent,
Looked o'er the leaden sea,
And laughed all mockingly.

Pale, on the pallid shore,
I saw the waves outpour
Spent treasure of the deep,
Wrought in the looms of Sleep.

And I, of peace forlorn,
Walked in the young day's scorn—
I whom the moon-girl kist
Out of the gossamer mist.

A SILENT POET

THREE is a poet who has made no rhyme,
Who never stirred upon a vibrant lyre
One crystal phrase of song, who never wrought
Deep rhythms, slow-furnaced in a minstrel fire,
And battered with the anvil blows of time.
No trick of tune or melody he caught
From happy singing bird, or marching days,
Or hoary forest, scented with the spring,
When all the airs were glad with bloom and wing,
And young Joy danced a-down the greener ways.

The inner voices of the quiet hills,
That breathe when all men sleep, have spoken oft
Clear words to him alone. The mystic sea,
Fondling the sand with white foam-fingers soft,
Bore whispers of that secret thing that thrills
Its weedy caves. The high winds, blowing free
Out of star silences, have deeply sung
To his rapt soul; and morn and eventide
Have steeped him in a melody that cried
Like smitten harp-strings when Delight was young.

A SILENT POET

The purple vine, whose trellis is the world,
O'erarched him with its branches, and lush grapes
Dropped a red blood of magic-ripened wine
Within his chalice. From the fretted capes
Of far dream-islands, where the scented pine
Raised its dark banners to the clouds that curled
Over a thought-wide ocean, his clear eyes
Gazed long and far. Sometimes a wand'ring keel
Out of the keen, bright dawning seemed to steal—
An opal gleam against the painted skies.

The mighty liturgies of Life and Time
Pealed a deep undertone within his soul;
And all sweet living things filled him with song.
Love, Memory and Death, that ever roll
Slow tides of music, welling full and strong,
Bathed him in thunder harmonies. Wild rhyme
Of Hope, a-tingle on the swaying air,
Filled all the pearly time of dawn and dew;
And in storm-stricken darknesses he knew
The organ-wailings of a world's Despair.

A SILENT POET

His heart and lips were touched with altar-fire,
Yet was his voice unheard, nor did his hand
Write large imaginings in singing phrase
For men to read; and few could understand
How the green chaplet of a poet's bays
Still clasped his brow. His heart-strings were his lyre;
And evermore his full, clear days would trace
The lyric thrill, the epic thunder-roll,
And the vast, moving drama of the soul
In finely written lines upon his face.

WRECKERS

THE sea is blowing red wine up the roaring
strait—

Casks they filled in Portugal are knocking at the
gate.

Throw the thorns upon the flame; give them cheer
and light—

A London ship with tattered sails will find the
rocks to-night.

The sea is blowing white spray—hear them grind
their teeth,

All the reefs of Inverdare hiding black beneath!

Whips are in the sloping rain hissing on the straw
That burns to bring the red wine with no king's
law.

The wind has brought a great cry; the breaking
timbers roar—

A wet face, a cold face, is drifting to the shore;
But brim the cup and laugh your fill, there's wine
and wine to spare—

The casks they hooped in Portugal are loose at
Inverdare!

HAUNTED MEMORY

I WILL go on to the sunrise, taking the road as
it winds
Beyond three trees and a broken gate and a great
house that cannot see—
Because the windows are shuttered over the ragged
blinds
And there is none within it to open the door to me.

But there is a hedge in blossom, and a scent of
honey is blown
Always out of the garden if one should loiter and
pass;
And it seems like a place that sometimes at evening
I must have known,
Walking with shining feet when the dew was wet
on the grass.

But I will go on to the sunrise, for over the hills
is the sea,
Making a murmur on rocks and lifting the salt
brown weed,
And a yellow flower on the cliff that is flaunting
a petal free,
While the stem below the blossom is heavy with
ripening seed.

HAUNTED MEMORY

I never have looked from the hill, but I know
 how the headland runs,
Caved and crumbling, to shelter a small boat near
 to the sand;
And the quiet water flashes a thousand swift little
 suns
That the breeze chases out to the ocean and hurries
 back to the land.

I will come back from the sunrise, taking the road
 past the door,
By the rusted gate that is broken and the hedge
 and the silent trees;
For surely a ghost walks with me who has been
 here too often before,
Hearing a sob in the water and a grief in the moan
 of the bees.

MARGARET

SOUL of my soul, I did but have and hold
For one short hour a costly living pearl,
Set in a treasure of pure-hearted gold,
And all the worlds are homeless while I miss
The warm, clear laughter of one dark-eyed girl.

In the immeasurable sum of things,
I float as floats a feather down the wind,
Hearing a beating as of waves and wings,
And murmurs of an elemental tide,
Far swaying to the thought of cosmic mind.

The coloured marbles of this universe
Spin on through countless sunsets. Balls of flame
Play with their lustrous shadows through the stress
Of timeless ages and forgetful days;
And no star knows who makes or mars the game.

Shrouded in words are all the worlds and ways,
Paths in the endless woods of arching thought,
Where lost imagination vainly strays
Under tall branches, and the yellow sun
Seems but a fancy in green meshes caught.

MARGARET

There is no height of vision to be won,
 No open space beyond the boles and leaves;
But every way the shadowy mazes run
With never hint of ending, till the night
 A solemn curtain of deep darkness weaves.

And if beyond the blackness there be light
 Of clearer stars, or but the utter peace
Where words fall meaningless, and thought and sight
Droop wearied wings for ever, who can tell?
 The play goes on whether we dream or cease.

The play goes on. Vast tides, in ebb and swell,
 Draw light and force to world-shores darkly known;
Flotsam and jetsam tremble, like the shell
Tossed white at midnight on the sandy shore,
 Where all the grasses of the dunes are blown.

What winds between the worlds a white soul bore,
 Bent like a lily in the soundless deep,
To cast in stranger meadows? Never wore
This world so fair a blossom on her heart
 As that frail sweetness that it could not keep.

MARGARET

For her I hold the curtained dark apart,
As I would hang upon the knees of God,
And force His eyes to answer. Echoes start
From the astonished silence, and I fall,
Blinded, from ways no foot of man has trod.

Down the dark steep I hear an angel call:
"Seek not to follow, 'tis enough for thee
To hold the sweetness of an hour in thrall . . ."
And, rippling to my feet, I feel the flow
Of the sun-cherished, hungry-hearted sea.

The rose and all her sisters richly grow
On summer-fondled stems. The magic fire
Of dawn and evening sets the world aglow;
The noon has played the spendthrift with his gold;
But all their splendours match not my desire.

In conquering dreams my empty hand can hold
The universal glory as a pearl,
Costly beyond the gift of singers old
Who swayed imperial strings; yet, holding, miss
The living laughter of one dark-eyed girl.

THE INVENTORS

RATHMOR made a flying spear
When the woods and we were young,
Barbed with copper, burnished clear,
From a leathern thong it swung—
Rathmor taught the world to fear
When the woods and we were young.

Down the glen across the stream,
Where the tribesmen's smoke arose,
Rathmor's shaft with flying beam
Smote a terror through our foes—
Down the mosses of the stream
Terror crept upon our foes.

Carul taught a cord to sing
When the dimpled world was fair,
With its fitful murmuring
Loading all the summer air—
Carul taught a thong to sing
Tickled with a bow of hair.

Up the rocks and through the glen
Carul's music crept afar,
Smote upon the ears of men

THE INVENTORS

Couching under pine and star—
Carul's music brought to men
 Dreams of wonder blown afar.

Colgar taught a tree to plough
 When the earth was soft with rain,
Scratched a sleepy valley's brow,
 Made the furrows rich with grain—
Colgar scratched a valley's brow
 When the land was soft with rain.

Up the coverts winding free
 Huntsmen passed with hound and horn,
Threshing straw beneath his tree,
 Colgar fed the world with corn—
Corn was good beneath his tree
 While the huntsman wound his horn.

Rathmor, Carul, Colgar still
 Ply their trades beneath the sun,
Spear and corn and music fill
 All the space that man has won;
Flying spears upon the hill
 Guard what plough and string have won.

THE INVENTORS

Colgar makes a tree to plough,
Carul makes a thong to sing,
Rathmor bids the nations bow
To the shaft his hands can fling;
Carul bids the peoples bow
When the plough and spear shaft sing!

THE DANCERS

KEEFE came up from Banagh fair
Drunk as decent man could be—
“Girl with night upon your hair,
Will you dance a jig with me?”

Och, the wind was mad that night,
Playing capers in the moon.
All the fairies, tripping light,
Brought their pipes to set the tune.

Quick and quicker went their feet—
Arms on hips and chins held high—
Sure, with music made so sweet
Lamest heels would learn to fly.

Och, a girl to dance like this
Must be kind of lip and waist.
Keefe was hungry for her kiss,
Thinking long her mouth to taste.

Happy breath the pipers blew,
Fairies clapped their hands with glee;
Keefe, while hot brogues hotter grew,
Burst his breeches at the knee.

THE DANCERS

Morning light—och, man, for shame!
Black the sin upon your head.
Wind and moon may share the blame—
Surely you have danced her dead!

Keefe looked sober, strange, and wise;
Spread before him, cold and still,
Sure, he saw with his two eyes
Kelly's scarecrow on the hill.

FOR JUDGMENT

WHEN Gabriel blows his judgment horn
Across the land and sea,
And every man of woman born
Stands forthright nakedly,
What friend of mine will face that morn
And speak a word for me?

Along the yellow of the street
The loud accusers come
With bills of life that I must meet—
(I fear the total sum
May make my bankruptcy complete)—
Will all my friends be dumb?

The many things I did not do,
The things I did too well,
Offences old, offences new
Against my soul must tell,
When very near and very blue
Appear the flames of Hell.

But that I wandered in the night,
Bear witness every star;
That, doing wrong, I strove for right

FOR JUDGMENT

And cast my thoughts afar,
With longings that were all as bright
As angels' pinions are.

Bear witness, little clouds that swim
Across the front of day,
How in large dreamings, golden-dim,
My best hours passed away,
Waiting, as wait the seraphim,
My debts to God to pay.

Bear witness all the moving air
That heard my spoken choice—
The lispings of a thought so fair
It scarce could find a voice,
Yet sought amid a world's despair
To bid a world rejoice.

Bear witness—nay, the scales are still
Against me as I stand!
The word of stream and field and hill
Meet not my sin's demand—
I strove with dreams a cup to fill
Still empty in my hand.

FOR JUDGMENT

What witness more? A woman speaks.
“He loved me well,” she cries;
“I thought I saw the highest peaks
Of shining paradise
Where wonder unto wonder seeks
Within his clouded eyes.”

The balance moves but by a hair,
For well the Judge must know
The tenderness that women wear
Though man should work them woe—
And she was young and very fair,
For Love had told her so.

The hour of judgment passes by.
Will no voice speak for me?
A little tremor thrills the sky,
Faint but persistently;
And, in the crowd, the Judge's eye
Seems one small child to see.

A laughing boy with dimpled hands,
I hear him stand and call.
The watchers over seas and lands

FOR JUDGMENT

Can mark the balance fall.
And the Judge hears and understands—
“He played the best of all!”

Were it of love or idleness,
When Gabriel splits the sea
And angels tread from out the press
Wine of eternity,
One romping game and long caress
Will plead to Heaven for me.

DANNY'S WOOING

'TWAS the spring in the air
 And a laughter that ran
Under Murna's black hair
 To the heart of a man;
With the sloe-bush in leaf
 And the wet clover green—
Och, April, you thief,
 Is it love that you mean?

'Twas her mother's white goat
 On the side of the hill,
And the rain on my coat
 With the sun laughing still,
And the thought of her eyes—
 Sure, my heart is a gift,
In the black of surprise,
 When her eyelashes lift!

'Twas the word that I spoke
 With the wind blowing clear,
And the small sob that broke
 In my throat full of fear—

DANNY'S WOOING

"Och, Danny," she said,
 "There's the white cream to set
And the pigs to be fed,
 And you're plaguing me yet."

Would she slip past the door?
 Och, her tongue was too wise;
But I listened far more
 To the look in her eyes—
"Sure, stay and be kist;"
 But she turned by the wall
With a fine-lady twist
 Of her neck and her shawl.

'Twas the spring in the air
 And a laughter that ran
With the toss of her hair
 To the heart of a man—
"Och, Murna, come out,
 Girl of dreams, and be kist"—
But she hit me a clout
 With the white of her fist.

DANNY'S WOOING

Would she slip past the door?
Sure, her mouth was too red,
With the cheek of me sore,
And those eyes in her head.
Troth, I kist her too well—
Twenty times at the least . . .
“Now, Danny, we’ll tell
A small word to the priest.”

THE ADVENTURERS

WE drove our prows across the light
Of many a sunset's spreading fire;
We raised new stars as pale and white
As lilies of a nun's desire.

We brushed the silver dawn apart
By shining continents untrod;
We felt the mystic winds that start
Clean-winnowed from the robes of God.

We touched at many a purple port
Mast-thronged with silken-corded ships;
On sailor-leave we held our sport
With winsome wine and scarlet lips.

We saw the walls of temples hung
In lace of light from pillars high,
Wrought by an artist's hand who flung
His dreams in stone against the sky.

We felt the awe of things divine
Where priestly voices chanted deep,
And all the dim air seemed to shine
With lustrous breath of gods asleep.

THE ADVENTURERS

At morn we stirred our anchor chain,
And, gliding down a rosy sea,
We heard the salt airs smite again
A harp of wilder fantasy.

Upleaped the waves, outsprang the storm.
Wild hands clapped thunder through the sky.
Draped in large cloud we saw a form
Tremendous as our doom go by.

The lightnings split the crashing world,
An arch of flame the darkness spanned;
Tossed as a leaf our ship was hurled
On gleaming shores of silver sand.

The tempest died, the broad sun laugh'd
On blue lagoon and purple palm,
The plumes of seabirds seemed to waft
A languid ecstasy of calm;

And through the tall, dark stems was seen
A wingèd palace of delight,
Against the pale sky lifting green
Its soaring peaks of malachite.

THE ADVENTURERS

A sweep of song. The doors flew wide.
With silver armlets crashing free,
Each blushing as a happy bride,
Came forth a white-robed minstrelsy.

They led us in, they made us cheer;
Ripe laughter sped the happy day,
Till one lone star shone pale and clear
And warm night kissed the sun away.

The silken webs beneath our feet
Were woven with an opal fire,
And, drowned in siren music sweet,
We pressed the lips of red Desire.

The envious moon with fingers white
Beat at the lattice window wide;
The young sun came with merry light
And tossed a rose to every bride.

The clear day spake no word of wrong,
By night the kind stars burned above;
Life rippled into happy song,
And every cadence died in love.

THE ADVENTURERS

And did we stay seven wild, sweet years?

Time lived not on our smiling isle;
Men build the almanac with tears;
Our days, our weeks were all a smile.

But once upon the midnight deep
We heard a wailing far away,
A cry as of all souls that keep
Tryst with the ghosts that walk in grey;

And once a wind of evening blew
A sobbing as of worlds in pain
Out of a wandering cloud to strew
Our path with hot, salt tears of rain;

And once we heard the clash of steel,
And once a trumpet shrilling death—
Oh, joy of life, that we should feel
That sudden catching of the breath!

Of each white love we begged a braid,
In sweet remembrance, of her hair;
From drifted shreds of wreck we made
A high-beaked shallop frail and fair.

THE ADVENTURERS

Dear hearts, farewell! We go to win
Crowns that with crusted jewels burn,
Hold sweet the keys to let us in
When, victor-weary, we return!

A breeze that wandered round the world
Blew speed into our questing sail,
The summer waters lightly curled
And broke before us lily pale.

Three days we ploughed a dimpled sea,
Three nights we watched the soft stars die,
Until a land of witchery
Crept up and purpled half the sky.

We saw the crested pine trees wave
O'er valleys wide of tilth and corn,
And battled turrets flaunted brave
A thousand banners to the morn.

A crescent harbour washed the feet
Of walls with wet weed trailing green,
Where wave-worn bastions ran to meet
Their shadows in the water's sheen.

THE ADVENTURERS

The people gave us greeting fair,
The sea-gates opened at our call;
And up tall flights of marble stair
We sought a sultan's audience hall.

Though high our bearing, few our words,
A royal gift was ours to bring—
The promise of our thirsty swords
Was meetest offering to a king.

We took an oath with solemn breath,
An oath reclaimed in deserts wide,
Through red years wounded to the death
Before the hot steel of our pride.

The summers grew, the winters pined,
A thousand trumpets blared our fame,
And down a war-tormented wind
Flamed the long terror of our name.

Backward on wings of triumph borne
Along the sunset's path we prest;
Ripe with large deeds, and battle worn,
We soothed our souls with dreams of rest.

THE ADVENTURERS

The land-gates opened at our call,
The city gave us welcome fair—
Oh, dreary was the Sultan's hall,
Our hearts were on the seaward stair!

We longed for silver beaches bright,
For purple palm and blue lagoon,
And magic halls of malachite
That sheltered love against the moon.

Oh, clinging music in the dark!
We pined for sweet white arms and dear,
Haste, haste the hour when we embark—
The laurels of our fame grow sere!

The crescent harbour faded far,
The wide sea drowned the land away,
The clear dusk blossomed with a star,
The hooded night put on her grey.

Night paled. The dawn came red with pain.
Above a dark and angry sea
We heard the salt airs smite again
A harp of wilder fantasy.

THE ADVENTURERS

Upleaped the waves, outsprang the storm.
Wild hands clapped thunder through the sky;
Draped in large cloud we saw a form
Tremendous as our doom go by.

The blind spray smoked from ridges green,
We fled before the shouting gale,
The curving waters seemed to lean
Above the straining mast and sail.

Seven days the loud seas laughed in scorn,
And when their voices died away
The silver sword that smote the morn
Was herald of a shoreless day.

Adown the waters of the noon,
Across the ocean of the night,
By dawn, and dusk, and star, and moon
We seek our Island of Delight.

The months go by, the slow years die;
But somewhere on the pale sea's breast
Our eyes shall know the palms that lie
Close-mirrored in the pools of rest.

THE ADVENTURERS

Our beards are hoar, the spent fires burn
 To ashes in the hope we keep;
But cold and weary we return,
 If not to Love, at least to Sleep.

DARK ROSALEEN

DARK ROSALEEN*

I.

ON a shining silver morning long ago
God made Ireland and you,
While His garden angels taught the green to grow,
Walking softly in the tears of His dew.

They had seven fine crocks of yellow seed,
Seven slips of the Heaven-bushes tall,
And seven holy bees for honey-mead,
But you, Heart, never there at all.

Then God felt up with fingers white
In the blue where the great blooms are,
And He plucked from the branches of the light
His youngest and best-loved star.

He set it, with the wonder of His hand,
In the brown mould crying in the dew
Till it grew to a blossom in the land,
And, Heart, but the face of it was you.

* Dark Rosaleen is the accepted translation of *Roisin Dubh*, one of the mystic names for the Spirit of Ireland.

DARK ROSALEEN

God made Ireland for love,
With a green dress trailing on the sea,
And one star less up above,
But the Dark Rosaleen for me.

II.

Mist over a far sea
And fields purple and green;
And 'tis there surely that I would be
With the old things seen,
With the old things I remember,
And the old things I forget,
By the turf fire of December
Or the June hedges wet.

There's a tree my mother's father
With his own hand set;
There's a well I'd drink at rather
Than all streams met;
There's an old gate swinging
In a low, grey wall—
And, och, for thrushes singing
When the apple blossoms fall!

DARK ROSALEEN

Light over a far sea;
And there Sleive Donard looks
With more thoughts to bring to me
Than all brown books,
Than brown books with gold bands
And pages yellow old;
For the blue mountain understands
All a heart can hold.

'Tis far away and far to keep,
And winding is the road,
And I have fifty fields to reap
With white corn sowed;
But the old things that were very fair,
And the old things I forgot,
And a woman's head with soft, grey hair
Are living with me yet.

DARK ROSALEEN

III.

This is my country: where the old, green mosses
Cling to the stone and stem,
And the low, wet wind that the small field crosses
Sets on the weed a dripping diadem
Of sweet new tears for the old and bitter way.
And always my own tears start,
Under the laughter down in my heart,
For something lost in the grey
Of a ghostly yesterday.

This is my country: where the warm wind singing
Through the kind flutter of trees
Is always a new thought delicately bringing
Up from the chatter of girlish seas,
Petulant seas that the jewels of sunrise borrow
To flash on the tears that start,
Out of the laughter up from my heart,
For something of older sorrow
That clings to the soul of to-morrow.

DARK ROSALEEN

This is my country: wherever God goes walking
 Down the clear, windy ways,
And the quiet people that were and are are talking
 Of great things and great days;
For you are there, with the flower of Hope in your hand;
 And always the glad tears start
 Deep in the heart of my heart,
And I seem to understand
 That the world is Ireland.

DARK ROSALEEN

IV.

Green rain over the land
And green grass under the moon;
For the wind, with a cool hand
 And a long mother-croon,
Has drawn the clouds away
 To let the good light through,
That a fine shadow may play
 With a thought fine and new.

Fine thoughts in the night
Walk over growing green,
And here will I have sight
 Of my Dark Rosaleen,
Sight and touch of her hand,
 And we will talk together
Words of a green land
 In green night weather.

The rain went over soon—
Och, sorrow for days gone!
And there's the white moon
 That shines on and on,

DARK ROSALEEN

Shines into the heart of me,
With a soft laugh in her light,
For a day's dark memory
And a clear, fine night.

We two had gone together
When blood was in the rain,
And the wild, red weather
Sobbed in long pain;
But far across the land
The moon in nights green
Gave me joy of the hand
Of my Dark Rosaleen.

DARK ROSALEEN

V.

Soul to soul have we gone through the lilt of the years,

Man-heart to woman-heart singing all the long way.

Queen were you in the harvest and queen in the midst of the spears;

And a king of a queen am I in service or play.

Brightens the front of battle under an angry star.

Not in the shelter you waited, nor ever shall wait;

But poising the dart beside me, in the maddened rush of the car,

With our hair blown back and mingled, you look in the eyes of Fate.

Darkens the front of battle—blood on the grass at our wheels—

The stricken horses fall, foaming with gusty breath—

And your white arm about me as a lost world breaks and reels,

With the voice of your courage speaking into the black of death.

DARK ROSALEEN

VI.

Murmur of voices in rooms near and far.

The night had grown old and old
Whispered the tree without, and a lonely star
Looked down through the window cold.

(Here is my grave made, grey and not green.)

The wounds of my soul were chill;
And hope, dropping like blood my fears between,
A thin life seemed to spill.

Would I live for this, would I live for a cold
thought
Of your voice mine no more?
I knew the tone, but never a word I caught
On the wrong side of the door.

The wall was a grave wall, grey and not green . . .
I went from your voice for a while
That my soul might die under white stars seen,
Or breathe if a star could smile.

Yesterday I was young, with a song in my heart;
But the voices were close and cold,
With your voice speaking strangely apart,
And I had grown old and old.

DARK ROSALEEN

VII.

I think my mother with brown hair came here
Out of a quiet place.
Where she had rested well, green year on year,
With leaves above her face.

Death had not held her in brown earth and cold,
But, happier trees among,
God took her to a garden sweet and old
Because she was so young.

She came to me with very quiet eyes,
Full of still light that crept
Out of long dreams that made her starry-wise
All summers that she slept.

I had been far across a stony hill
And down a glade of thorn,
And tasted of all fevered springs that spill
The waters of red scorn.

I thought my mother with brown hair came here
And on my loneliness
Set one white hand of cool and holy cheer
In tenderest caress.

DARK ROSALEEN

She had not passed the brambles and the stone,
Nor known my withered land;
Yet, when I faltered, weary and alone,
God made her understand.

VIII.

In the grey quiet of morning the voices were still;
Among the roses you walked with head bent low.
Fear, with fingers of silence, tapped at my window-sill;
Yet my heart, though it trembled, seemed to feel
and know.

You had come back to me, back from the words of
the night,
Back from the voices that seemed so far and so
near.
Among red roses you walked, and your face was
white;
But your voice in my heart was mine to love
and hear.

DARK ROSALEEN

IX.

My Love is the voice of a song
 Out of green leaves,
Blown in the dusk along,
 Over hedges and sheaves,
Down to a quiet place
 Below the hill
Where the darkening water's face
 Is very still.

My Love is a light and a sign;
 For all through the heavy night,
When never a star will shine,
 Her hand is white,
Leading me, leading me
 Over the misty hollow
And hill to the sea . . .
 Heart, let me follow!

My Love is the grace of God.
 With bare feet will I walk
To her over the black sod
 And the bruised flower on its stalk;

DARK ROSALEEN

For she has the pity of years,
 And my heart goes clean,
Washed with her holy tears,
 Of dark things seen.

My Love is a white girl
 With lips like a June rose;
And under a brown curl
 I whisper what no one knows.
For, oh, woman of mine,
 'Tis all the world I would miss
If daylight and night-shine
 Were not in your kiss.

DARK ROSALEEN

X.

The White Birds made a flutter in the land,
And the birds of the Glad Heart were they,
Where April rainbows wetly, sweetly spanned
The green world that blossomed into May.

Down the furrows of the long field they came,
And the glad White Birds went on before.
By the eyes of them I knew their ancient name—
Would I bid them all good evening at the door?

I will make a little shrine in green of trees,
In a secret place of worship will I stand;
For very sweet and wonderful are these,
The old, white gods of my own land.

XI.

Thank God for truth under trees,
Or in open grass
When the Little People please
To trippingly pass.

DARK ROSALEEN

The kings have not seen them going
Because their hearts are blind;
But the great winds are blowing
And the wide night is kind

And there's a happy fiddle
That splits leafy June
Clean through the middle
With a quick fine tune;
And when the summer's broken
For all the world to see,
Words shall be spoken
Under bush and tree
As clear as water lying
In old stone wells—
For words have wings for flying
And tongues like bells—
And we'll have done with seeming,
And find what old years knew,
That days are only dreaming
And fairy nights are true.

DARK ROSALEEN

XII.

God made his world green,
And a fool with a knife made it red.
I stand with my Dark Rosaleen
Counting the graves of our dead;
But the children go by—
White, shining children with a green banner
above them—
Pointing faith to a clean sky
In a world made to love them.
Green over red!
And this is Saint Padraig's day—
Hope goes like wine to the head
That God will have His way!

DARK ROSALEEN

XIII.

I think I have not hated any man,
Nor laid on any living heart the guilt
Of the wrong things done since wrongs began;
But I hate the black walls men have built.

I hate the walls that shut the prison in,
And the walls that shut the poor man out,
The walls where the black guns grin,
And the walls where the quick wheels shout.

Wide is the world and very green,
And the white winds think no wrong;
And 'tis there that my Dark Rosaleen
Has always laughter in her song.

But out in the cold and the wet,
When the hard doors close upon us all,
For a thousand years have I met
My White Love weeping by the wall.

DARK ROSALEEN

XIV.

My Love goes out in a green dress,
And her face is like a flower,
And red, red are her lips to press
All the white hour.

I will walk far at her side
Up and down the day,
Lest any wind should see my bride
And blow a thought away.

And very near her will I sit
When she takes her rest
To watch the little sighs flit
Like moths about her breast.

And when the sky is dark above
And good stars peep,
They'll know the way that happy love
Kisses kind sleep.

DARK ROSALEEN

XV.

I know a place where little waters sing
Under waving cresses by a green mossy bank;
And the high brown hills have a shadow there to
fling,
And the trees stand rank on rank.

There will I make a garden and fence it round
with stone,
With five currant bushes near the gate;
And pansies for your thoughts when you walk
there alone
And a white rose to whisper while you wait.

But I will go afar in the green world, up and down,
Hunting songs with a fiddle and a bow;
And you will watch me coming when the dusk
grows brown
By the turn of the road we know.

There in our garden at the ending of the day,
When the wind comes lisping from the south,
I will show the spoil I won and take for my pay
Seven fine kisses on the mouth.

DARK ROSALEEN

And all night long will the little waters sing,
One song that they never can forget,
Of the sun that is waiting a new day to bring
That is always the best day yet.

DARK ROSALEEN

XVI.

Put the horn to your mouth and blow
Up the valleys and over the sea.
Let all the great winds know
That Ireland will be free.
Put the horn to your mouth and blow—
Victory, Victory!

Not with the beat of a drum,
Rolling anger over the grass,
Will the great, white wonder come
Surely to pass;
But one will be making a song,
And one will be saying a prayer
Till out of their hearts will go all the wrong
And shame that was there—
Carried away on a song,
Won to grace on a prayer.

Put the horn to your mouth,
Blow over land and sea.
For the North will kiss the South
A kiss full and free—

DARK ROSALEEN

The kiss of a holy love
That the White Watchers above
Call Victory.

Proudly, proudly will the tall men go,
Working a clean plough and a new spade.
By the way they carry their heads shall all men
know
There is a light in their hearts that will not fade.
But they will build well with good stone,
And they will dig well in free land;
And the fair thing and the rare thing that is
theirs alone
Will be singing till the world can understand.

Put the horn to your mouth and blow!
Who is it walks like a queen?
Heart of my heart, I know;
It is you, my Dark Rosaleen.
It is you with the breath of your mouth
Calling the North to the South,
Calling the years to be free,
Calling to land and sea—
Victory! Victory!

DARK ROSALEEN

XVII.

It is the voice of a child
Piping up the years to come.
How have the harvests smiled,
How have the sorrows grown dumb !

God walks far in the green,
With His foot wet in the dew ;
Would He speak to my Dark Rosaleen
The secret word that He knew ?

It is a child's song
Piping through summers fine.
Heart, we have waited long—
He is soul of your soul and mine.

• • • •
God made Ireland for love,
And He talks in her ear as a Friend,
With one star more up above
To light her white to the end.

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